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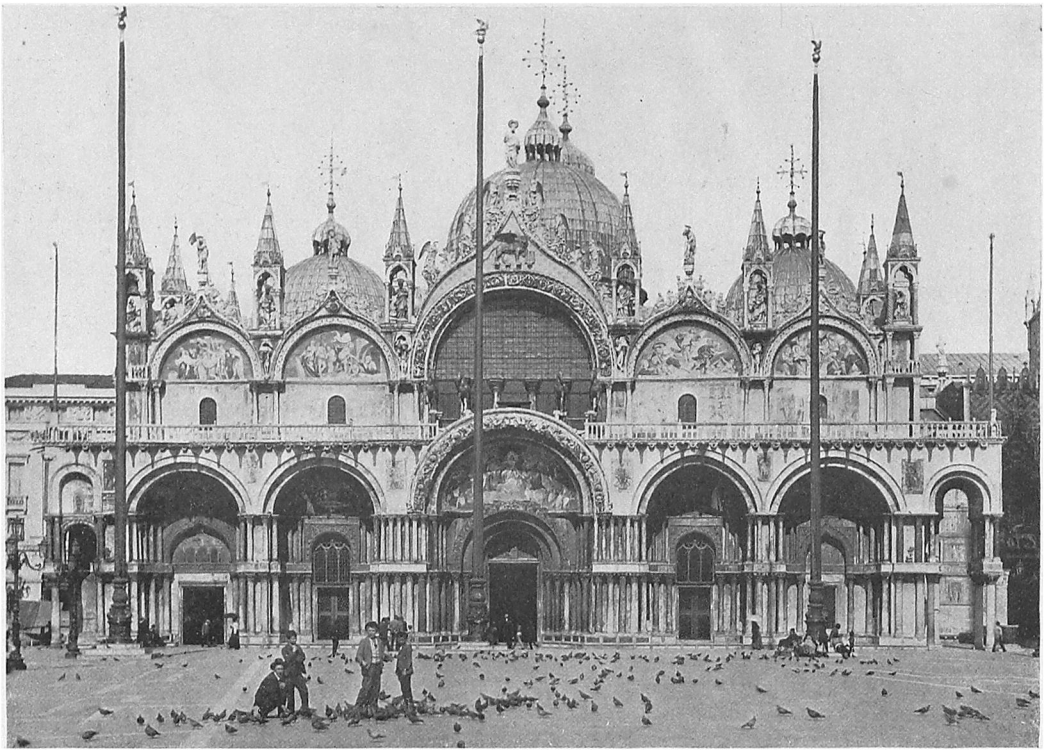
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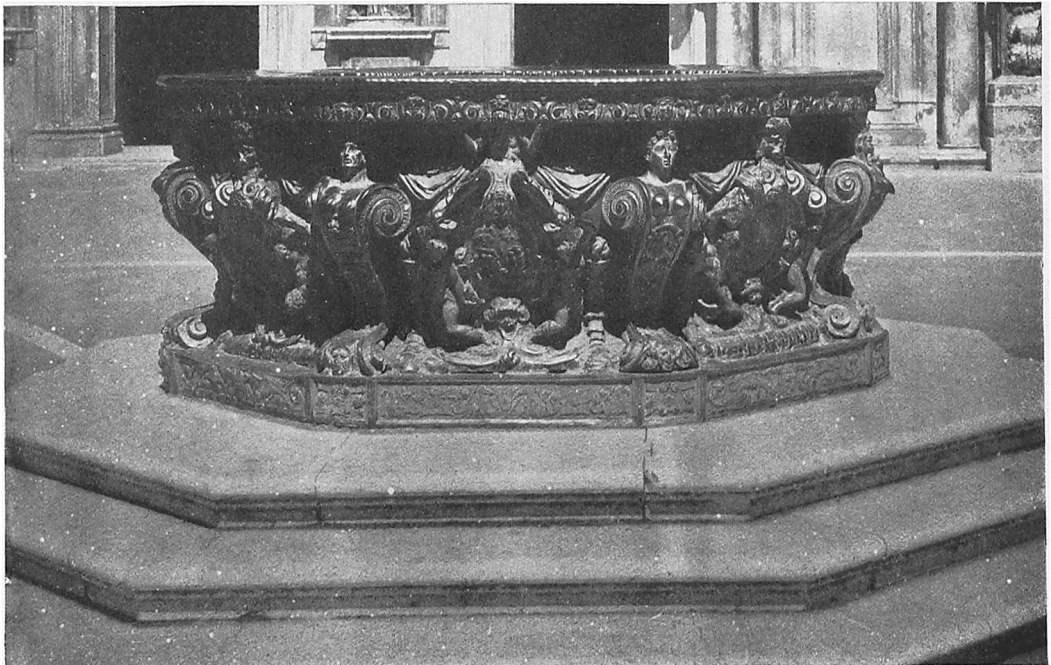
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BASILICA OF SAN MARCO

—Courtesy Tobey Furniture Company



WELL IN THE COURTYARD OF DOGES PALACE

—Courtesy Tobey Furniture Company

Venice and the United States in Business and in Art

By LIONEL ROBERTSON

THERE is much in common between the spirit of the Venetian Republic and our own United States in its foundations, in its commercial development and, finally, in its art. On the surface we think of our progenitors as being far removed from the pageantry of life and the mental image of Venice in our minds is always one of much crimson, gold and stateliness; yet the real fundamentals of economic development and art growth in the two republics are quite similar, and the analogy of beginnings is most interesting in its similarity. The early Venetians were made up of refugees from the mainland, building their first homes at Rialto. This location they considered a haven from the invaders under Atilla the Hun from the northland, also a refuge from their enemies on the main land. Our Puritan progenitors left England on account of religious persecution and set up their homes on the barren shores of Plymouth and Cape Cod. It was an equally desperate struggle to keep back the tides and waves from the Adriatic in the early days of the Venetian Republic and again our forefathers were equally strenuous in their efforts to protect their families from Indians and wild animals while the Colony was being founded.

The early Venetians were naturally traders and distributors. The exporting and importing business was really the foundation of the vast wealth of the Venetian nobles and the life of the sea soon

began to take on a national aspect. Venetian ships at that time sailed to all the known parts of the world. Rich merchandise from the Orient was brought back and distributed to the cities along the various rivers which converge at the coast near Venice. We need only to think of the early traders and merchants among our ancestors who did a large export business in furs and raw materials of all kinds in exchange for manufactured articles from England and France to see the analogy. The early Venetian Republic, like the early United States, was not an industrial nation. It was a nation of commerce, of merchants who assembled and distributed most wisely.

Venice is not Italian. While it speaks the Italian language its traditions are far different from those of other Italian cities and states. The intimate commercial relations of the Republic with the Orient from the eighth down to the sixteenth century has caused a glamour of romance throughout the entire art and customs of a people who are naturally more imaginative than most any race of human beings that ever lived. The Arabian Nights became a part of their psychology. In proceeding with this interesting comparison and analogy between the Republics of Venice and the United States we must not fall into the error of thinking of Venice as being Italian. In its early days it, too, was a melting pot and drew the adventurous spirit into its national family from all corners



CABINET AND CHAIR ADAPTED FROM VENETIAN EXAMPLES

—From the shops of the Tobey Furniture Company

of the globe. When we think of this we can see that it is quite natural that Venetian art should be sumptuous, romantic and imaginative.

Venetian art, like its commerce, was never creative but an interesting assembling of elements which it obtained from its contact with different races and peoples into a most beautiful composite which we call Venetian. When one closes his eyes and recalls the salient points of Venice which remain in his memory he finds the Gothic art of the north in the arcades and traceries of the Palace of the Doges. He finds Byzantine art in the architecture of the Basilica of San Marco, this facade being constructed of actual columns and

arches brought from Byzantium and then across the Grand Canal is the flamboyant Renaissance of Bernini in the architecture of the Chiesa della Salute.

Venice is a little of everything in art and yet there is no sense of jumbling. It is assembled in a perfect synthesis which is creative in the perfection of its composition. To compare again we have all the architecture and furnishings and art of the early times in our Republic brought from England, Holland and France. We were well up into the nineteenth century before we actually began to manufacture enough to be called an industrial nation. One of the most interesting features of a visit today to our incomparable New Orleans is

to study and see the furnishings and art of the early grand families which reproduced in that southern city the refinements of Paris itself. New York and Boston brought more from London but New Orleans never lost the stamp of the Gallic capital.

It was about the twelfth century that Venice reached its zenith of commercial conquest. Vast fortunes were piled up by the merchant princes of that time which could be compared with the fortunes of our merchant princes in America of a decade ago. In Venice we had the families of Dondola, Morosini and Foscari. In America we have the families of Astor, Vanderbilt, McCormick and Spreckles.

The munificence of the gifts of the merchant princes in the two republics is in-

finite and varied in its analogy. Some specific examples will be interesting. For instance, the Basilica of San Marco was founded by a gift of Doge Guistinian Partecipazio and the Fourth Presbyterian Church on the Lake Shore Drive in Chicago was made possible by one of our mid-western families noted for its financial supremacy, the one beautiful building being as exotic in its setting as the other. The details of a medieval cathedral with its perfect setting for the pageantry of the church of medieval times used as a background for the services of Scotch covenanters is equally exotic as the Pagan architecture brought from Greek Byzantium to make a setting for the ritual of a Christian church. Yet, when we pause to think, herein lies their charm. The very con-

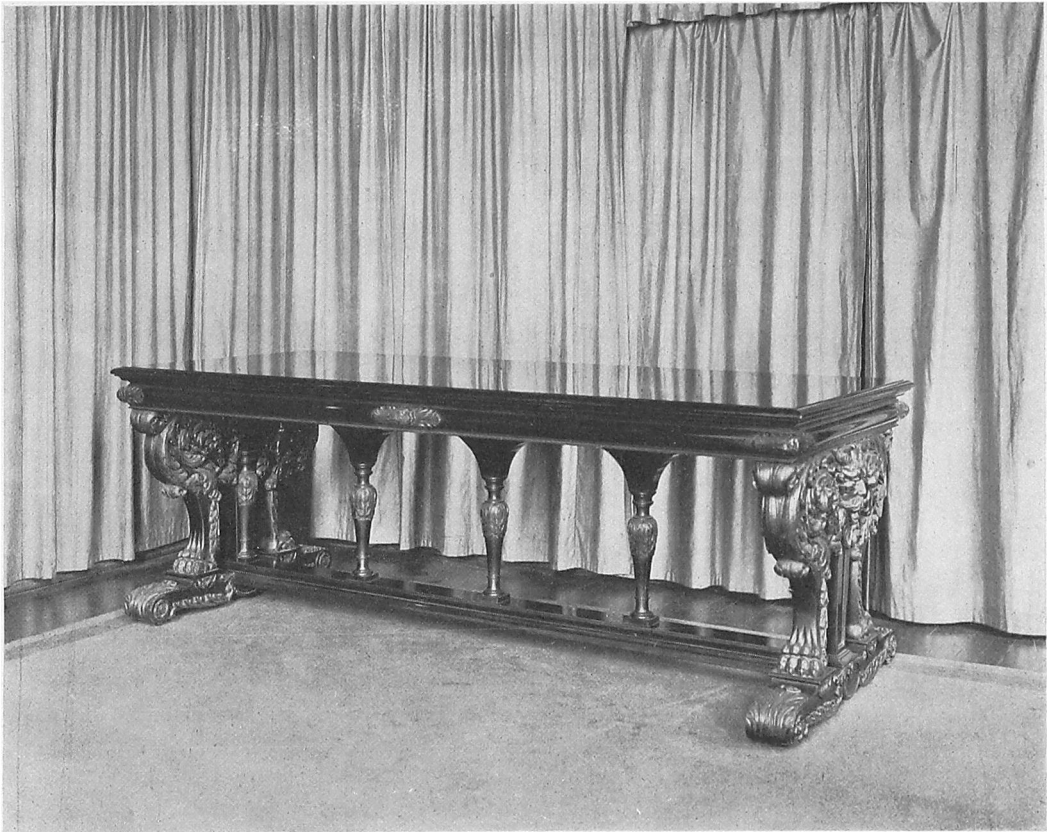
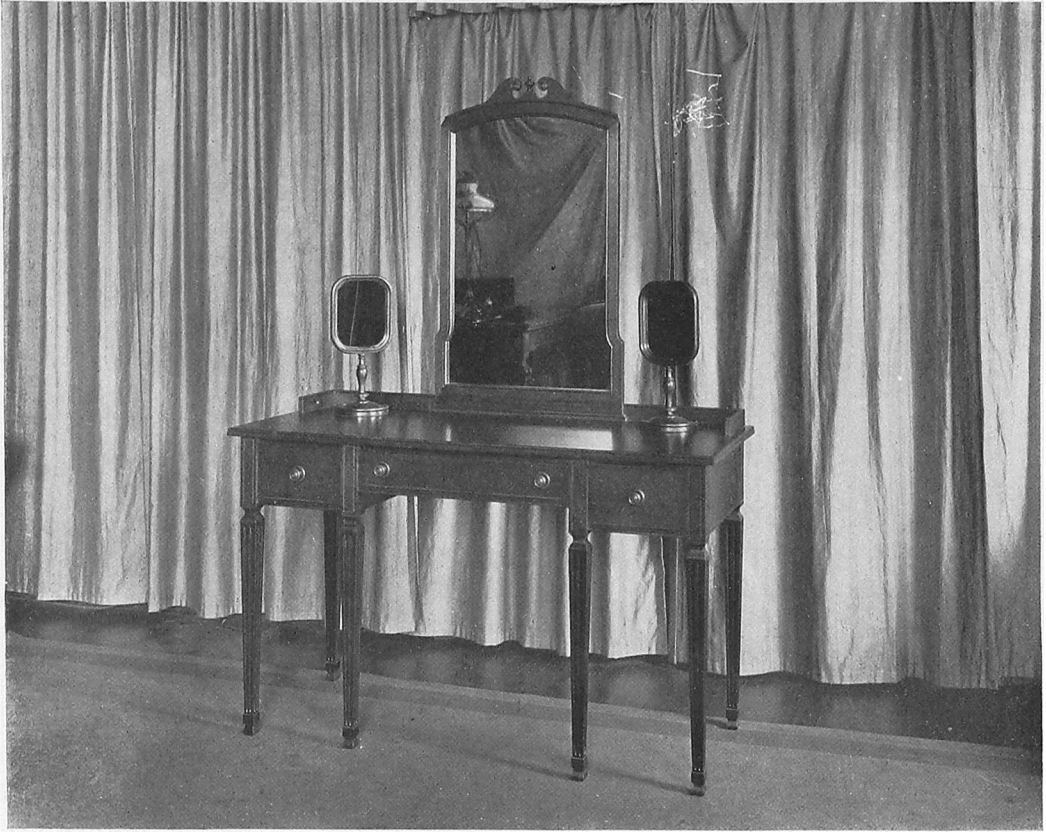


TABLE WITH DETAILS SIMILAR TO WELL IN THE COURTYARD OF DOGES PALACE
—From the shops of the Tobey Furniture Company



TOILET TABLE ADAPTED FROM VENETIAN EXAMPLES

—From the shops of the Tobey Furniture Company

trasts are both Venetian and American. It takes a virile race to produce these artistic contrasts and to be at home in a seemingly foreign setting. The homes of these merchant princes too have this similarity. The palace of the Cavatti family on the Grand Canal is sumptuous in the extreme and, while being Italian Renaissance in its composition, it is rich in details and of the Gothic from the north and the Byzantine and Saracenic from the east. In relation to this let us consider the residence of Mr. Harold McCormick in Lake Forest, Ill. The Patio is distinctly south Italian in feeling and yet it is interestingly adapted to our American social life.

Inasmuch as we have not developed an

American style in art or furnishing and inasmuch as we consider ourselves the heirs of all the ages and that we can draw from the wealth of all the art which has gone before, is it not appropriate that we should find the art of Venice so adaptable to our modern American life? This adaptability of the Venetian to the American is not so strange when we consider the similarity of statecraft, commerce and national attitude toward life itself. To make this idea practicable it will be interesting to consider some examples of recent development in furniture produced in the studios and workshops of an American firm which aims not to slavishly copy examples of former periods but to catch the spirit in the

design and reproduce the conditions of their production rather than the mere letter of their form.

This illustration of the long table with its carved ends, shown in the illustration, is interesting to compare with the bronze well in the courtyard of the Palace of the Doge, while the dining room furniture and dressing table shown preserve the spirit of

this romantic Venetian art in the simpler forms adapted to more general American use.

There is at present in America a universal enthusiasm for things Venetian. They tell us that the history of any period is recorded in its art forms. How natural then that there should be this linking of Venice and America.

Among Chicago Galleries

By EVELYN MARIE STUART

JOSEPH Pierre Nuyttens is exhibiting at Carson Pirie Scott & Company's, coincident with their patriotic display of the original war posters which represent the year's work of the midwest division of the Department of Pictorial Publicity.

There is much in common between the two shows for so many of Mr. Nuyttens' pictures breathe the spirit of the hour that we have come to think of him as a war artist. Three of his exquisite conceptions are shown in connection with our liberty loan article and they speak for themselves. Never has a more poignant message been conveyed through the medium of a more exquisite imagery. His is the gift that expresses even pain, through beauty. There is a piercing sweetness about some strains of music which is comparable to his rendering of Belgium in chains waiting with face uplifted for the day of retribution.

In all his art there is nothing of the brutal or the bold. His muse is ever delicate and lovely and yet she can play upon the heart strings with a magic hand whose lightest touch sends a thrill to the core of our being. Grace and charm in abundance characterize the drawings and etchings of this gifted man, and through them one comes to comprehend a sensitive spirit that joys and sorrows but the more keenly for



MISS LEON RIDDELL

Portrait by Nuyttens

Courtesy Carson Pirie Scott & Co

this gift of beauty; for what must be the inner horror at the actual bald and hideous facts of a man who shrinks from voicing